

December 16, 2021 Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners

District #3 in the Township of Hanover

County of Morris, Cedar Knolls, New Jersey

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on December 16, 2021 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231. The Board observed a moment of silence for all those who have given their lives in service of their communities and nation.

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners Steven Cornine, Mary Lou DeSimone, Michael Dugan Sr., Michael Dugan Jr., and Robert O'Hare were present.

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, Lt. McGuinness, EMT Waldron, EMT Thompson, and Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the December 2, 2021 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 2, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Cornine seconded the motion. All were in favor.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER:

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is almost through the year and has spent 90% of the expense budget so everything seems to be going well.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly report on December 9, 2021 along with the monthly Fire Prevention, EMS, Training, Apparatus and Building Maintenance reports from Lieutenants and FFs responsible for them. Chief DiGiorgio updated the Board on the following items:

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant, AFG, was submitted today. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the District intended to replace outdated hose with the money from this grant.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the reviews for most of the full-time employees are completed and submitted to Commissioner O'Hare for his signature and noted that the remaining reviews should be submitted to the Board in the next few days.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the V.I.P. checks, formerly Pay per Call, have been cut and most were handed out. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has a few people who he has not seen yet to give them their check. Chief DiGiorgio noted that those individuals on payroll should receive their payment on December 17.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that a joint meeting with Whippany is tentatively set for January 11, 2022 to discuss the formation of one fire district. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Chief Perrello indicated that Whippany will be assigning 2 liaisons from their Board and that he is waiting for a response to confirm the January 11 meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report. Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any questions for Chief DiGiorgio.

Commissioner DeSimone asked Chief DiGiorgio if he had reviewed the performance reviews that have been submitted to Commissioner O'Hare before they were gone over with the individuals. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Officers wrote the reviews, went over the reviews with the individuals, both the individual and the Officer signed the reviews, and then he signed the reviews. Commissioner DeSimone asked for clarification that Chief DiGiorgio did not review them before they were gone over with the individual being reviewed. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that he did not review them before they were signed by the Officers. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she had asked that Chief DiGiorgio review the performance reviews before they were presented to the individual in case he wanted to add anything or make any changes to the review. Commissioner DeSimone felt that this was something he should do in the future because there might be something there that he may disagree with or want to add commentary to. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he found some sample reviews that are specific to fire departments who also have collective bargaining

agreements that he will submit to the Board for review. Chief DiGiorgio felt that these might be a better template for the District going forward because they are geared toward a specific position and less general than the ones the District is currently using. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the Lieutenants put a lot of time into the individual reviews and felt that the samples he found might help streamline the process. Commissioner DeSimone noted that performance appraisals are never easy but that the Board would review the samples for next year.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any other questions for Chief DiGiorgio. There were no other questions.

EMS: Commissioner O'Hare asked Chief DiGiorgio where things stood with Revenue Guard regarding tracking EMS revenue. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he went back and forth with Jennifer from Coronis about a list of pending items and that the bookkeeper reported that there was an increase in revenue for November after this. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are still items that the District has not received a disposition on and he submitted any of these items that were greater than 90 days back to Jennifer at Coronis and he is waiting for a response back on them. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will send a follow up email to her about the outstanding items and he will cc Mr. Postorino who is our liaison with Coronis. Administrator Schultz reported that the bookkeeper reported to him that the December EMS revenue is again lagging. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the District should meet with them and asked if the District should hold the check for November until this is resolved. Commissioner O'Hare felt this was a good idea and that a meeting should be scheduled for the 1st week of January.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there is a resolution before the Board tonight for a referendum to exceed the cap for the 2022 budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Budget Committee has been working hard trying to balance the 2022 budget but it seems like the referendum is the only way to balance it. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that last year the District dipped into the fund balance and this year will be required to do so again in addition to raising the cap. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that if the District does not raise the cap now, then next year it will be twice as hard to balance a budget because expenses have gone up and the District cannot stay within the 2% cap. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that if the Board passes the resolution tonight

authorizing the referendum, the Board has the opportunity to change its mind on the referendum if something should happen that increases revenues.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if there were questions for the Treasurer. Commissioner Cornine reported that there is also a resolution for a budgetary corrective action plan and asked if Commissioner Dugan Sr. wanted to report on that. Administrator Schultz reported that the resolution is a requirement of the 2020 audit. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Board has 2 resolutions regarding the 2020 audit, one to accept the audit and another adopting the corrective actions that were proposed in the audit.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked for an executive session.

NEGOTIATIONS: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Commissioner Dugan Jr. deferred to Commissioner DeSimone since he was on a call during the last meeting. Commissioner DeSimone reported that they reported back to the volunteers at their meeting regarding the insurance question they had regarding use of the 2nd floor. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the volunteers were informed that Fire Co. sponsored functions could be held without any insurance issues but personal functions would require proof of insurance from the individual who wants to hold the function. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the volunteers had some questions but that they seemed to be okay with the Board response. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked where the rumor came from that the volunteers were blaming the Board for taking their parties away that they used to have and that this was why morale was down so much. Commissioner DeSimone reported that nothing was said about this at the meeting. EMT Thompson felt after listening to the discussions about this that it could all have been a misunderstanding about an insurance rider being much more expensive than it actually turned out to be. Commissioner O'Hare felt that the volunteers were also interpreting this as a rider on their personal insurance as opposed to getting a one-day event policy. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that when this change was instituted, the Board met with the Fire Co. to go over the different aspects of it. EMT Thompson was not sure that many of those people are still around. Commissioner O'Hare noted that people forget over time also. Commissioner Dugan Sr. still questioned how it came up recently. EMT Thompson felt that the

volunteers' interpretation was that the insurance policy would cost them thousands of dollars and were pleased to hear that it would be around \$125. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she stressed that a Fire Co. function would be covered under the District insurance and they may want to hold a Super Bowl party in January. EMT Thompson reported that he has never looked into it himself but the way people were talking they thought it would be big bucks to get the insurance for a personal function. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he was glad that it was cleared up. EMT Waldron reported that he was able to go online to purchase the event insurance very easily when he held a personal function and that the major difference in price resulted from whether alcohol was going to be served or not. EMT Waldron noted that the price for an event with alcohol was \$125 as opposed to \$80 without. Commissioner O'Hare noted that if alcohol was served there is a stipulation in the event insurance policy that prohibits charging a fee for the alcohol. EMT Thompson noted that the 2nd floor has to be cleaned out before worrying about renting it out. Commissioner Dugan Sr. thought that President Hark Jr. addressed this. EMT Waldron reported that the back room got cleaned out and caused the front room to be a mess. EMT Waldron reported that it was brought up again a couple of months ago and President Hark Jr. even walked around with his laptop so everyone could see what the front room looked like but there have not been many attempts to clean it. Commissioner DeSimone thought there was 5 people who showed up one Sunday to work on it.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that a Zoom Operations Meeting was held prior to Fire Co. Meeting so he could give everyone an update on operations pertaining to the status of goals and objectives that were set for 2021 and outlining some goals and objectives for 2022. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he put out an operations survey that he received 12 responses on. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he opened up the survey for another 2 weeks. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there was some good feedback and some things that need to be addressed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he informed the Fire Co. members that the items will be addressed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Commissioner DeSimone had asked if he could share some of the feedback at this meeting but that while he felt it makes sense to share them, it makes more sense to share them by group. Chief DiGiorgio felt, for instance, that feedback on the cleanliness of the 2nd floor did not need to be shared with the Board and that feedback relative to the

Commissioners, Officers, Career Division, Volunteer Divisions and himself should be categorized and shared with the pertinent group. Commissioner DeSimone felt that categorizing the comments was good but that the Board should also be able to see verbatim the individual comments. Commissioner DeSimone reported that Chief DiGiorgio could use the categorized comments to create an action plan to address items. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his goal was to create one document which includes the categorization along with the individual comments. Chief DiGiorgio reported that after everyone has a chance to review the document, a decision will be made as to who has to address which comments. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there were some comments about the state of the kitchen and that people would like to be able to use it while working but are not able to because of its current state. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked which commissioners were on the building and grounds committee and if they had heard any comments about the kitchen. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he was not notified about the kitchen. Commissioner Cornine felt that the notification would come when the survey report was done. Chief DiGiorgio felt that maybe it was just informally discussed before and now the Board is being formally notified and it can be addressed.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Nothing to report.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Nothing to report.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Chief DiGiorgio asked if the Planning Committee encompassed the formation of one fire district. Commissioner Dugan Sr. confirmed that the by-laws were changed to incorporate the Consolidation committee into Planning. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would use this committee to communicate information about the tentative January 11 meeting.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Committeeman Cahill reported last Thursday night the Committee passed a resolution having to do with commissioner compensation that was forwarded to Administrator Schultz. Committeeman Cahill reported that he attended the District 2 Commissioners meeting on Monday night and presented the same letter that was presented to the Joint Board and the District 3 Commissioners meeting. Committeeman Cahill reported that the letter triggered some conversation about the meeting but that everyone seemed to agree that there would be 2 representatives from each Board. Committeeman Cahill asked if Chief DiGiorgio would be at the January 11 meeting. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that he would attend to discuss what the goals are. Committeeman Cahill reported that he would set up something at Town Hall and asked if this is something that can be done during the day or if it should be done during the evening. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it would depend on the liaison's schedules. Committeeman Cahill asked who the liaisons from District 3 were. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Commissioner Cornine and Commissioner Dugan Jr. were the liaisons. Committeeman Cahill reported that he would send out an email to get some suggested times.

Committeeman Cahill reported that the District 3 EMT staff helped a family member of his on Saturday and they did a great job, were very empathetic and professional, and wanted to thank them and let the District know. Commissioner DeSimone asked Chief DiGiorgio to let the crew know.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner DeSimone reported that she has not received any comments on the Professional Standards Procedures Manual from other members of the Board. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she had some questions that she took to Asst. Chief Martin for clarification. Commissioner DeSimone reported that if the Board were to implement this there is training that would need to be done by the individuals who would be doing investigations. Commissioner DeSimone reported that Asst. Chief Martin indicated that there are currently 2 individuals in the District who are trained to do investigations, Asst. Chief Martin and EMT Thompson. Commissioner DeSimone reported that there are some changes on the Boards end that the Board will need to understand. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the document had been sent to Mr. Trimboli for review. Administrator Schultz reported that he was not at the meeting that night and would forward him a copy for review immediately. Commissioner DeSimone

reported that the Board has to be sure that they are comfortable implementing this because it impacts how any investigations are done. Commissioner Dugan Sr. Reported that he has read part of the document but has not completed it yet.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if there was any other old business. There was none.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked Chief DiGiorgio if he remembered his request that any training be done in the evening whenever possible so that volunteers were able to attend. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he does not know about the comment but that this is the way training has traditionally been handled. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are certain training classes that are joint training with Whippany during the day with the career staff. Chief DiGiorgio reported that more recently there was the joint training with Madison and Morristown that took place during the day. Chief DiGiorgio reported that for the longest period of time the 1st Monday of the month was EMS training and the 2nd or 3rd or 4th has always been fire training. Chief DiGiorgio asked if there was something that Commissioner Dugan Sr. was specifically talking about but the training schedule for this coming year is out. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are some things that are dual sessions that are offered during the day and then again in the evening. Commissioner DeSimone remembered the request because she had also asked about offering training at night during the summer. Commissioner DeSimone reported that Chief DiGiorgio clarified it Monday night when she asked about training and FF Ujfalussy responded that it would be held at night. Chief DiGiorgio felt there was a little bit of miscommunication that he shared with Commissioner DeSimone that FF Ujfalussy shares training opportunities from other departments County wide that the District has no hand in scheduling. Commissioner DeSimone reported that there was a discussion about the lack of evening or weekend training opportunities earlier this year but that the upcoming schedule includes evening training opportunities. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there is still certain training that is offered during the day but will be offered also on the weekend or evening if needed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that sometimes a course may be offered during the day in the Spring and on a weekend in the Fall. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District tries to share the opportunities evenly and noted that there were times this year that evening training classes had to be canceled because no one came out. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the volunteers needed to try

to get some of their training done before November when everyone is trying to get their pay per calls numbers in. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there is also here say complaints floating around the firehouse that the District does too much training. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she could attest that there was no training conducted around the firehouse during the summer for the volunteers. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he could go back and show all the training nights that had to be canceled at the Academy for the next meeting. Commissioner DeSimone reported that maybe the subject matter for the training during the summer did not pertain to EMS.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

A Special Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. at the firehouse for the purposes of a Public Hearing on the 2022 Budget.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be determined.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: EMT Thompson reported that he had a question and asked if he ask it in closed session because it is kind of a legal question that might inadvertently cast someone in a bad light and that is not the intent. Commissioner O'Hare agreed to the request.

EMT Waldron asked about the issue of salaries for the Part-Time and Per Diem EMTs that needed clarification from Administrator Schultz on how they came about, what they will be, and when the EMTs will start seeing them. EMT Waldron reported that there was a disparity in how much each person was making and no one knew the formula that was used. Administrator Schultz reported that \$2 / hour was added to the starting salary and \$0.50 / hour added for each year after that. EMT Waldron asked for clarification because the salaries that were given out 2 meetings ago do not support this formula. Administrator Schultz reported that those figures were tentative and have since been updated to reflect the aforementioned formula. EMT Waldron asked if the new salaries would be retroactive to January 1 if they do not start at the first of the year. Administrator Schultz reported that the new rates would go into effect on January 1, 2022 and he felt that the Board would adopt the new Terms and Conditions at

the January 6 meeting which is before the first payroll of the year will be run. Administrator Schultz reported he and Commissioner Dugan Sr. hoped to have a meeting with the Part-Time and Per Diem EMTs to make sure that any issues are addressed. EMT Waldron reported that none of the Part-Time or Per Diem EMTs have any issue with when the Terms and Conditions are passed as long as the new salaries are retroactive until January 1. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Board had stated at the last meeting that the salaries would be retroactive to January 1. Administrator Schultz reported that salary budget figures are calculated by individual and consider anniversary dates. EMT Waldron proposed that after an EMT's probationary year that they should get a raise on January 1 as opposed to their anniversary date. Administrator Schultz felt that this would favor employees that start at the end of the year and would not be budgetarily responsible and that the Board also feels this way.

RESOLUTIONS: Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any objections to voting by consent agenda for the following resolutions. There were no objections.

Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-12-14-118 accepting the 2020 District Audit.

Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-12-14-119 adopting Corrective Action Plan.

Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-12-14-120 authorizing a Cap Referendum.

Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-12-14-121 authorizing a COE be made to a Volunteer Member.

Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-12-14-122 appointing Permanent EMT Biehler.

Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolutions, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-12-16-123 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 7:44 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will not be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 8:46 p.m.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Dugan Jr., seconded by Commissioner Cornine, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steven Cornine, Secretary